

SPEECH

OF

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IN DEFENCE OF

The Tariff of 1844, and the Protective Policy and American Labor.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, APRIL 24, 1844.

Continued from the Standard of Tuesday.

The effect of Free Trade upon British India is seen in the decay of all branches of her industry. This melancholy picture is thus sketched in Blackwood:

"It is the boast of our manufacturers—and such a marvel may well afford a subject for exultation—that with cotton which grew on the banks of the Ganges, they can, by the aid of British capital, machinery, and enterprise, undersell, in the production of muslin and cotton goods, the native Indian manufacturers, who work up their fabrics in the close vicinity of the original cotton fields. The constant and increasing export of British goods to India, two-thirds of which are cotton, demonstrates that this superiority really exists; and that the muslin manufacturers in Hindostan, who work for 3d. a day on their own cotton, cannot stand the competition of the British operatives, who receive 3s. 6d. a day, aided as they are by the almost miraculous powers of the steam-engine. Free trade, therefore, is ruinous to the manufacturing interests of India; and, accordingly, the Parliamentary proceedings are filled with evidence of the extreme misery which has been brought on the native manufacturers of Hindostan by that free importation of British goods, in which our political economists so much and so fully exult."

Contrast this example of the destructive influences of Free Trade with the auspicious effects of protection. When Frederick the Great ascended the throne of Prussia, that kingdom had no manufactures and no national industry, and was as poor in resources as it was weak in military power. Of the pitch to which this warrior king carried the military glory of Prussia, it is not in place here to speak. He encouraged manufactures in every possible manner by bounties, loans, premiums, &c., and not only trebled the number of manufacturers, but established many new manufactures, and broke the shackles of Prussian vassalage. The sequel of this patriotic and benign legislation is told in the following paragraph from a historian of the reign of Frederick:

"Before the commencement of this reign, Prussia had but few manufactures; now we are in possession of almost every possible kind of manufacture, and we can, not only supply the Prussian dominions, but also furnish the remote counties of Spain and Italy with linen and woollen cloths; and our manufactures go even to China, where some of our Silesian cloths are conveyed by way of Russia. We export, every year, linen cloth to the amount of six millions of crowns, and woollen cloths and wool to the amount of four millions."

The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. OWEN) denounces the protective system as the British system. If he means that it deserves the appellation from the benefits it has conferred on Great Britain, I agree with him in the justness of the term; but if he means that it has been exclusively adopted in that country, he is wrong. Protection of domestic industry has been the cardinal principle of every civilized nation, and their prosperity has been in proportion to the care they have taken of their manufacturing interests. France, Holland, Prussia, Austria, and Russia, have all built up their manufactures under the influence of protective duties. Free Trade is the policy of savage nations unacquainted with the rudiments of civilization—Protection that of enlightened communities, jealous of their independence and prosperity. The theory of Free Trade forms an appropriate theme for abstract philosophers, who puzzle their metaphysical brains with speculations as intricate as the cobwebs that cover their dusty chambers. Protection is the doctrine of practical statesmen, who have to deal with the stern realities of life, and the great interests of human societies. The theories of Adam Smith have never been reduced to practice in the country of his birth. They continue to be as zealously expounded as ever to foreign nations; the reason is very candidly stated in the March number of Blackwood. This ingenuous confession ought to teach us the utter fallacy of these plausible doctrines:

"It is related of the Lacedemonians, that while all the other citizens of Greece were careful to surround their towns with walls, they alone left a part open on all sides. Thus, superiority in the field rendered them indifferent to the adventitious protection of ramparts. It is for a similar reason that England is now willing to throw down the barriers of tariffs, and the impediments of custom-houses, and that all other nations are fain to raise them up. It is a secret sense of superiority on the one side, and of inferiority on the other, which is the cause of the difference. We advocate freedom of trade, because we are conscious that, in a fair unrestricted competition, we should succeed in beating them out of their own market. They resist it, and loudly clamor for protection, because they are aware that such a result would speedily take place, and that the superiority of the old commercial State is such, that, on an open trial of strength, it must at once prove fatal to its younger rivals. As this effect is thus the result of permanent causes affecting both sides, it may fairly be presumed that it will be lasting; and that the more anxiously the old manufacturing State advocates or acts upon freedom of commercial intercourse, the more strenuously will the younger and rising ones advocate protection. Reciprocity, therefore, is out of the question between them: for it never could exist without the destruction of the manufactures of the younger State; and if that State has begun to enter on the path of manufacturing industry, it never will be permitted by its Government."

The prodigious wealth that England has attained from the development of manufacturing industry, is the source of that power which has made her the first nation of the globe. Napoleon saw this, and, by his continental system, endeavored to exclude her manufactures from the coasts of Europe. In spite of the line of armed sentinels that guarded every harbor from the Neva to the Tagus, and from the Tagus to the Adriatic—in spite of confiscation, imprisonment, and death, such was the superiority of England in manufactures and the arts, and the dependence of Europe upon her for the most necessary fabrics, that British goods found an entrance into the closed ports of Europe, and penetrated into the French capital itself, as well as across the Alps into the plains of Italy.

Unless he could destroy the manufacturing prosperity of his relentless enemy, Napoleon saw that it was in vain to expect to hold subjugated Europe in chains—a power still existed which could feed and clothe the armies of the world. For this purpose, in conjunction with the continental system, he offered extravagant premiums and bounties to the successful inventors of machinery and new processes of the arts. He established the production of beet-root sugar in France to ruin the import of British sugars into Europe. Every new branch of industry, as it arose, was crushed beneath the overwhelming competition of England, who smuggled her goods into every European market, and undersold every rival trafficker. Napoleon, and the people of Europe, finally discovered that a system of domestic industry could not be forced into immediate existence like a hot-bed production, but that it required time and the hand of fostering legislation to bring it to maturity.

A striking instance, both of the impossibility of carrying the Berlin Decree into execution, and of the poverty of the continent in manufactures, is related by Bourrienne. Soon after the issue of that famous order in council, there arrived at Hamburg a thundering order for the immediate furnishing of 50,000 great coats, 200,000 pairs of shoes, 16,000 coats, 37,000 waistcoats, and other articles in proportion. The resources of the Hanse Towns were wholly unequal to the supply of so great a requisition in so short a time; and after trying in vain every other expedient, Bourrienne, the French diplomatic agent, was obliged to contract with English houses for the supply, which soon arrived; and while the Emperor was denouncing the severest penalties against the possession of English goods, and boasting that by the continental system he had excluded British manufactures from the continent, his own army was clothed with the cloth of Leeds and Halifax, and his soldiers would have perished amid the snow of Prussia Eylan, but for the seasonable efforts of British industry.

With the vast resources that her manufacturing capital gave her, Great Britain, single handed, carried on the war against Napoleon. When the kingdoms of Europe had all sunk beneath the irresistible tide of victory that bore Napoleon to universal empire, England alone opposed a barrier to the accomplishment of his ambitious projects. Proud mistress of the seas, she swept the French flag from the ocean, and enjoyed the commerce of the whole world; from her inexhaustible treasury, she replenished the coffers of the impoverished nations of Europe; armed and equipped the peasant soldiery of Spain and Portugal; sustained the hosts of patriotic Germans who, in the secret meetings of the Tugendbunden, were preparing the overthrow of the iron-heeled despot, who had overthrown their government and laws, until she carried the flag of European redemption from the blood-stained sierras of Spain to the victorious field of Waterloo, where the armed hosts of Europe met and vanquished their common oppressor.

Was there no monitory voice speaking to us from the records of history against the ruinous tendencies of Free Trade, our intercourse with contemporary nations would be sufficient, of itself, to teach us the utter impracticability of the universal prevalence of such a system. I have appealed to history to show the power that England has gained by the protection of her industry. I now refer to figures to show with what care she

keeps the balance of trade on her side. The total value of exports and imports of Great Britain and Ireland, for three successive years, was as follows:

Year.	Exports.	Imports.
1839.	£110,194,716	£62,004,000
1840.	116,473,678	67,432,964
1841.	116,903,668	64,377,962
	£343,572,062	£193,814,926
	193,814,926	

Balance in favor of Great Britain, £149,767,136, or an annual average of £19,922,378, equal to \$237,237,414.

On the other hand, the amount of imports into the United States from foreign countries, for the nine years from 1831 to 1839, inclusive, exceeded the total amount of exports therefrom by the sum of \$235,278,693, as is shown by the following statement:

Year.	Imports.	Exports.
1831.	\$103,191,124	\$81,310,583
1832.	101,029,266	87,176,943
1833.	108,118,311	90,140,433
1834.	126,521,332	104,336,973
1835.	149,895,742	121,693,577
1836.	169,980,034	128,663,040
1837.	140,989,217	117,419,376
1838.	113,717,404	108,486,616
1839.	163,092,132	121,028,416
Total.	\$1,195,534,562	\$960,255,957
	960,255,957	

Balance against U. S. \$235,278,605

This heavy balance against the United States accounts for the depreciated currency, and for the indebtedness of corporations and States in the United States to the lords of Threadneedle street: hence has resulted the insolvency of banks and individuals, and the infamous doctrine of repudiation.

This same nation, which so zealously propagates the principles of Free Trade, and so earnestly reprobates them in her domestic policy, imposes almost prohibitory duties on our agricultural produce. The following duties are in the British Tariff on American products: Salted beef, 60 per cent.; bacon, 109 per cent.; butter, 70 per cent.; Indian corn, 32 per cent.; flour, 32 per cent.; rosin, 76 per cent.; sperm oil, 33 per cent.; sperm candles, 33 per cent.; tobacco, unmanufactured, 1,000 per cent.; tobacco, manufactured, 1,200 per cent.; salted pork, 33 per cent.; soap, 200 per cent.; spirits from grain, 500 per cent.; spirits from molasses, 1,600 per cent. On these fourteen articles she imposes an average duty of 355 per cent. The same unjust policy to this country is seen in the differential duties of the British Tariff. By that tariff England imposes a duty of 14s. per cwt. upon bacon imported from the United States, while it is admitted at a duty of 3s. 6d. from her own provinces; beef is admitted on a duty of 4s. from her provinces, and taxed 16s. from the United States; American fisheries pay a duty of £15 per ton, the British 1s. per ton; our rice pays a duty of 6s. per cwt., rice from her provinces 6d. per cwt.; on oars from the United States she collects a duty of \$36 per 120, on the same from her provinces, a duty of 90 cents; on hand-spikes from the United States \$9 60 per 120, from her provinces 24 cents; on firewood from the United States \$2 40 per 216 cubic feet, from her provinces free. England admits no article but specie free of duty; and this is the consistent nation that is to be our exemplar and instructor in Free Trade!

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BRINKERHOFF) spoke of the hardship of the Tariff of 1842 upon the farming interest. That Tariff, sir, was framed for the protection of all interests. The agriculturalists share in its benefits as well as others. By the price current in January last, says the report of the Committee on Manufactures, the leading articles of agriculture, if imported, would pay a duty equal to an ad valorem, thus:

Cotton, duty 3 cents per pound—equal to 30 per cent. ad valorem.	
Wool, 30 per cent. and 3 cents per lb.	40 "
Beef, 2 cents per pound.	64 "
Pork, 2 cents "	34 "
Bacon, 3 cents "	52 "
Lard, 3 cents "	50 "
Cheese, 9 cents "	180 "
Butter, 5 cents "	51 "
Potatoes, 9 cents per bushel.	36 "
Flour, 12 cents per barrel.	25 "
Wheat, 25 cents per bushel.	33 "
Oats, 10 cents per bushel.	33 "
Hemp, \$40 per ton.	30 "

On these thirteen articles, which comprise the great staples of agriculture, there is an average duty of 50 cent.

The importance of domestic manufactures to the farmer is proven in the fact, that fifteen-sixths of all the grain and potatoes raised in this country are consumed at home, and that only one-sixteenth is exported. Suppose, sir, the doctrines of Free Trade in full operation, and that we had no manufactures—the inevitable consequence of such a policy—where would the farmer find a market for his surplus produce? In England, where there is an average duty of 355 per cent. upon our agricultural produce? In Mexico and the Argentine Confederation, where the duties are prohibitory? In Chili, where the duties on our breadstuffs range from 25 to 50 per cent.? In Peru, with a duty of 30 per cent.? In Portugal, Russia, the Netherlands, and the two Sicilies, with prohibitory duties upon our agricultural products? There is not, sir, a port in the world which is not hermetically sealed against the importation of our breadstuffs, except in a time of scarcity, when they are necessary to feed a starving population. The farmer must look to the home market—to the four millions of persons engaged in manufactures—for the consumption of his products, and fair prices.

The iron manufacture alone will illustrate the importance of domestic industry to the farmer. Since the introduction of railroads, we have imported from Great Britain 360,000 tons of railroad iron. It is estimated by experienced ironmasters, that for each ton of bar iron the following agricultural produce is consumed:

20 bushels of Wheat and Rye,	average	75 cents per bushel,	\$15 00
57 pounds of Pork,	"	5 cents per pound,	2 85
43 pounds of Beef,	"	4 cents per pound,	1 72
16 pounds of Butter,	"	12 cents per pound,	1 25
2 bushels of Potatoes,	"	30 cents per bushel,	60
1 ton of Hay,	"	\$7 30 per ton,	3 50
Vegetables, Fruit, &c.	"		
(Horses, &c. \$1 43.)			\$26 00

Multiply 560,000 tons by \$26, and we have the great sum of \$14,560,000 of the produce of the farm, which would have been expended here, had the Government been as liberal in its policy to the American manufacturer as to the British. In the iron works of Pennsylvania alone, there was consumed, in 1841, agricultural produce to the value of \$5,788,987. The importance of a home market is seen in the increased value which agricultural lands and produce bear in the vicinity of a manufacturing town. The establishment of the mills at Lowell in 1820, gave great value to the rude and rugged country around that place. The site of Lowell, which, in 1820, cost a few thousands, is now worth several millions.

DEFENCE OF FACTORY LABORERS.

The gentleman from Indiana, (Mr. OWEN), has dwelt much upon the distress and misery of the factory operatives in Great Britain. I do not mean to deny that there is much suffering among the laboring poor in England; it is not, however, one of the natural results of the manufacturing system. The corn laws, an expensive Government, and high taxation, are the causes of pauperism and poverty in England. Manufactures, by affording employment, alleviate the distress of those who would otherwise have no means of support. If the gentleman from Indiana intends to represent that there is more of the wretchedness of poverty, and more vice, among the manufacturing than the agricultural population of England, he is greatly mistaken. I appeal to the testimony of a distinguished author to refute this assertion.

"From a review of the population throughout England, it appears," says Colquhoun, on Indigence, "that, contrary to the received opinion, the numbers of paupers in the counties which are chiefly agricultural, greatly exceed those where manufactures prevail! Thus, in Kent and Surrey, where the aggregate population is 576,687, there appear to be 77,770 paupers, while, in Lancashire, where the population is 672,731, the paupers relieved is only 46,200."

In the three manufacturing counties of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Stafford, the offenders are only one out of every 2,500; whereas, in the agricultural counties of Norfolk, Kent, and Surrey, they are one out of 1,600; whereas, it appears that the latter districts have above half as many more criminals as the manufacturing, in proportion to their population. This is a strong and decisive fact.

In the three manufacturing counties, the paupers are only 8 per cent. of the population; whereas, in the agricultural, they are about 14 per cent. What becomes of the argument, then, of the gentleman? If so many of the factory operatives in England

are rendered miserable by the manufacturing system, and if their condition is an evidence of the evil influences of that system, what shall be said of English agriculture, the statistics of which exhibit such an alarming preponderance in pauperism and crime over all other pursuits? Of course, the same state of things does not exist in this country, where the farming community is the most independent, comfortable, and virtuous portion of American society.

The alleged unhealthiness of factory employment, upon which the gentleman has dwelt at large, is just as fallacious as the demoralization of which he has drawn so dark a picture. In the report of the Commission to inquire into the condition of factory laborers, submitted to Parliament in 1843, there is an overwhelming mass of testimony in refutation of the unhealthiness of factory labor.

"In conclusion, then, it is proved by a preponderance of seventy-two witnesses against seventeen, that the health of those employed in cotton mills is nowise inferior to that in other occupations—and, secondly, it is proved by tables drawn up by the secretary of a sick club, and by the more extensive tables of a London Actuary, that the health of the factory population is decidedly superior to that of the laboring poor otherwise employed."—*Analysis of the Factory Report*, p. 16.

"The general tenor of all the medical reports in my possession, confirms Mr. Harrison's view of the effect of factory labor on the health of the younger branches of working hands. It is decidedly not injurious to health or longevity, compared with other employments."—*Reports of Inspectors of Factories*, August, 1834.

"It is gratifying to be able to state, that I have not a single complaint laid before me, either on the part of the masters against their servants, or of the servants against their masters; nor have I seen or heard of any instance of ill-treatment of children, or of injury to their health by their employment."—*Report of L. Horner*, Esq., 2d July, 1834, p. 10.

"Not many would be employed, because there are few mill-owners who wish to have them before ten years of age; but in some branches of the cotton trade they would be employed at eight, or even younger; and as their occupation in the mills is so light as to cause no bodily fatigue, they would pass their eight hours there as beneficially for their health as at home; indeed, in most cases, far more so. Although they would get little, that little would be an object to many poor families."—*Ibid*, July 21, 1834, page 10.

"Mr. Saunders says—'It appears in evidence, that, of all employments to which children are subjected, those carried on in factories are amongst the least laborious, and, of all departments of in-door labor, amongst the least unwholesome.'"—*Report I*, page 51.

"It appears, moreover, that, as far as could be ascertained, the state of education among the factory operatives, though far from what it ought to be, was to say the least, less deplorable than that of rural districts, and of other classes in towns; that great efforts had been made by many of the largest manufacturers for the intellectual and moral improvement of their work-people; and that, 'as to the immorality said to be engendered by the factory system, the whole current of testimony goes to show that the charges made against cotton factories on this head are calumnies.'"—*Report*, Sup. p. 201.

THE AMERICAN LABORER.

The error of the gentleman lies in applying the condition of tax-oppressed and over-populated England to other countries widely different from it in natural resources, extent of territory, and institutions of Government. In England wages are low from the superabundance of labor, while rent and breadstuffs are high from the heavy taxation on real estate for the support of an expensive Throne, and from the corn laws, which enable the English landholder to sell his own products at the highest rates, by excluding those of other nations. In this country, an entirely different state of things exists. Instead of a surplus of labor, or an over-crowded population, we have a vast extent of country thinly peopled—with tracts of virgin soil yet unbroken by the plough, and inviting the hand of cultivation—a noble expanse of habitable and tillable land, extending from the Mississippi to the Pacific, where comfort, independence, and prosperity may be enjoyed by the poverty-stricken denizen of the great cities.

Here, agriculture and manufactures are rival bidders for labor.—There is no surplus of labor, as in England, which obliges the operative to accept of such wages as the employer may offer. The laborer is sought after, and from the competition for his services, he is always sure of such a rate of wages as may enable him to support his family, and to provide for the reverses of life and the infirmities of age. Moreover, if no employment can be had in manufactures, the unsettled lands of the West offer an opportunity for the acquisition of domestic and pecuniary ease, such as no other country presents.

In England, the man of humble means has no participation in the affairs of Government. He cannot rise to posts of honor in the Kingdom, from his inability to compete with the favored sons of fortune.—The control of the Government is vested in the wealthier classes, who administer it more for their own benefit than that of the productive classes. An odious property qualification excludes a large proportion of the poor from the ballot-box. Here, we are all equal at the ballot-box, and the poorest citizen in the community has a voice in the control of public affairs and public men, as omnipotent as that of the wealthiest. The distribution of the right of suffrage, sir, in this country, and the influence it gives to the productive classes over the policy and operations of Government, is one reason why the American mechanic and operative occupies a higher position than in England. The workingmen and farmers have the destiny of the American Government in their keeping—they constitute the vast majority whose opinions and interests direct its movements and prescribe its policy—and it is to them we are indebted for the exhibition of all those beneficial influences which have made it an exemplar of political liberty for the whole civilized world.

Labor is spoken of, on this floor, as if it tended to mental and physical degradation. We are urged not to encourage manufactures, as, according to the opinion of some gentlemen, they brutalize and deteriorate the operative. I do not know, sir, whence gentlemen draw their opinions of labor. For my part, I know no distinction between the American mechanics and operatives and any other class of citizens. Some of the most eminent and useful men that this country has produced, rose to distinction from mechanical pursuits. Franklin left his printing press to chain the lightning of the heavens, to form a Constitution for a nation, and to represent his country in foreign Courts. Roger Sherman, the shoemaker, was an eloquent advocate of independence in the Congress of the Revolution, and a statesman of great ability. Nathaniel Greene, the blacksmith, became a General in the Revolution, under whose gallantry, skill, and courage, some of the most glorious battles of that glorious era were achieved. Were these men less respectable, less worthy, less honorable, because they had commenced life at the forge, the press, and the last? Had labor degraded them, and so brutalized their minds as to lead them to prefer an ignominious slavery to a war for liberty and right? No, sir; they were patriots, self-sacrificing men, who perilled every thing for the attainment of a great end—the independence of their country. The first rally for independence in the Revolution was made among the farmers and mechanics. It was the hard hand of labor, the iron muscle and sinewy arm and the stalwart frame of the robust sons of industry, that first displayed the flag of national redemption, and first bore the arms of righteous resistance against the hireling soldier of British tyranny. In moral worth, intelligence, and information, the mechanics and operatives of this country have no superiors among any portion of our population. I throw back these imputations upon labor, and I defy gentlemen to prove their charges.

It is not the Protective System which is the enemy of the workingman, or I should not be its advocate. It is Free Trade, which repeals all protective duties, and forces us into hopeless competition with the pauper labor of Europe, that is the worst enemy of the American laborer. The price of European labor forbids all chance of competition with it, on our part, unless we are prepared to reduce a portion of our fellow-citizens to the same condition as the famished operatives of Birmingham and Manchester. Abolish the duties which protect American industry—remove all restrictions upon foreign imports—and how can manufactures thrive in this country unless, as the Free Traders insist, the wages of labor be reduced?

Concluded in our next.